AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A printing system comprising:

at least one customer service system for receiving, via a network, order information sent by a customer and representing at least one print service to be performed on image data;

a plurality of ~~laboratory~~ servers for performing print services on image data; and

an order assigning system existing between the at-least-one customer service system and the ~~laboratory~~ servers, for receiving the order information from the customer service system, for selecting one of the ~~laboratory~~ servers to perform the at least one print based on predetermined information, and for transferring the order information to the selected ~~laboratory~~ server;

wherein the order assigning system transfers laboratory information regarding at least ~~laboratory~~ one of the servers to the customer service system that received the order information,

the customer service system generates selection information for determining the selected ~~laboratory~~ server based on the laboratory information transferred from the order assigning system, and transfers the selection information to the order assigning system, and

the order assigning system uses the selection information as the predetermined information,

wherein the selection information includes a candidate list of candidate ~~laboratory~~ servers determined based at least on the laboratory information transferred from the order assigning system, wherein the customer service system allows a user to designate the desired one of the

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~~laboratory~~ servers from the selection information, wherein the order assigning system uses the user designation as the predetermined information, and

wherein the order assigning system determines the selected ~~laboratory~~ server based on the laboratory information and customer-specific information, wherein the laboratory information is based on the location of the at least one laboratory and said customer-specific information is a customer's address or a customer's area code.

8-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended)   A printing system comprising:

a plurality of ~~laboratory~~ servers for outputting a print; and

at least one order receiving assigning system comprising

a customer service system for receiving, via a network, order information sent by a customer and representing at least one print service to be performed on image data and including customer information from a customer, and

an assigning system for selecting, based on predetermined information, one of the ~~laboratory~~ servers to receive the order information, and for transferring the order information to the selected ~~laboratory~~ server;

wherein the order receiving assigning system or systems generate selection information for determining the selected ~~laboratory~~ server based on laboratory information related to at least one of the plurality of ~~laboratory~~ servers, and use the selection information as the predetermined information,

MRC/JRS/ta

wherein the selection information includes a candidate list of candidate ~~laboratory~~ servers determined based at least on the laboratory information, wherein the customer service system allows a user to designate the desired one of the ~~laboratory~~ servers from the selection information and wherein the order assigning system uses the user designation as the predetermined information, and

wherein the selected ~~laboratory~~ server is determined based on the laboratory information and customer-specific information and wherein the laboratory information includes the location of the at least one laboratory and said customer-specific information is a customer's address or a customer's area code.

15-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended)   The printing system of claim 7, wherein the order assigning system determines the selected ~~laboratory~~ server based on the laboratory information and the at least one print service represented by the order information.

25. (Previously presented)   The printing system of claim 24, wherein the laboratory information includes information regarding the capability of the at least one laboratory for performing the particular print service.

26. (Currently Amended)   The printing system of claim 7, wherein the laboratory information includes information regarding a load status of the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server.

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27. (Currently Amended)   The printing system of claim 26, wherein the load status of the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server is determined by querying, at the time of selection, the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server for load status information.

28. (Currently Amended)   The printing system of claim 26, wherein the load status of the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server is determined by querying, at the time of selection, a database containing load status information for the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server.

29-30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended)   The printing system of claim 14, wherein the selected ~~laboratory~~ server is determined based on the laboratory information and the at least one print service represented by the order information.

32. (Previously presented) The printing system of claim 31, wherein the laboratory information includes information regarding the capability of the at least one laboratory for performing the particular print service.

33. (Currently Amended)   The printing system of claim 14, wherein the laboratory information includes a determined load status of the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server.

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34. (Currently Amended)   The printing system of claim 33, wherein the load status of

the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server is determined by querying, at the time of selection, the at least

one ~~laboratory~~ server for load status information.

35. (Currently Amended)   The printing system of claim 33, wherein the load status of

the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server is determined by querying, at the time of selection, a database

containing load status information for the at least one ~~laboratory~~ server.

36-39. (Canceled)